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Title: Need to commemorate the Namasudra Movement of 19th Century Bengal.

**DR. TAPAS MANDAL (RANAGHAT):** Thakur Harichand is God in Bengal. He worked among the subaltern population. He was born in this community in Bengal on 11 March 1812 in Orakandi located in present-day Bangladesh. Harichand received little formal education. At a very large age, he accepted the path of religious reformation for giving service to and uplifting the subaltern people of Bengal. Harichand's doctrine is based on three basic principles-truth, love, sanctity. He preached his ideologies and religious philosophy in twelve commandments and asked his followers to pursue his works.

He cultivated the Matua Sect. the Matua believes that male and female are equal. They discourage early marriage. Widow remarriage is allowed. The sect became popular in East Bengal and he led the untouchability movement called the Chandal movement in India. He built an English medium high school at Orakandi for the people of lower community called Nama Shudra (untouchable community). He united the people of this community but was against religion conversion.

Shri Harichand Thakur and his son, Shir Guruchand Thakur, have been the leaders for the depressed people of Bengal and struggled relentlessly to do away with social ills like untouchability, inequalities of caste systems, right to enter temples or shrines and an overall development of rural Bengal in the $19^{th}$ century.

I urge upon the Union Government for commemorating this memory and announce a special award in the memory of Shri Harichand Thakur and Shri Shri Guruchand Thakur for outstanding role in effecting holistic development in the socio-economic life-structure of the scheduled caste/tribe, publish their biographies in Hindi, English and all vernacular languages, to release postage stamps in their memory and include Thakurnagar Matua dham in PRASAD scheme.